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**Interviewee: Daniel Farkas**

**Interviewer: Brendan Plann-Curley**

**Interview date July 21, 2021**

BPC: This is Brendan Plann-Curley, Reference Librarian at Pace University. Today is July 21, 2021, it is 10 AM, and I'm in my home in Brooklyn talking with Dan Farkas over Zoom for an oral history interview. Welcome, Dan. Why don't we just get started? Tell me a little bit about yourself: where you went to school and if you want to talk about your early life and family life or just pick it up with your academic background.

DF: OK. I grew up in the New York area, out on Long Island. I went to high school on Long Island in a town called West Hempstead. I ended up at college at New York University, which at the time had a campus in the Bronx. It's now Bronx Community College, but it was the University Heights campus. In fact, I think that along with Washington Square it was one of their first campuses, but about 30 to 40 years ago they sold the property in the Bronx to the City of New York. While I had an interest in math at the time, I ended up majoring in history, which has kind of served me well in terms of the liberal arts. At that time, I really wanted to get into computing, so I knew that that was going to be somewhat of a passion. Part of the reason is that I love traveling and computing was the kind of field where you could work anywhere. So, you could be in California, you could be in Europe, you could be anywhere.

BPC: When was this approximately?

DF: I graduated from high school in 1965, and I graduated from college in 1969, and prior to graduating from college, I had spent three months hitchhiking around Europe from Greece to Portugal to the Netherlands. So, I graduated from college and, and I knew I wanted to live in Europe, so I went off and lived in Amsterdam for about a year on a houseboat, and then my reason for coming back was that, among other things, I had some student loans that were coming due, so I really had to find a real job. I had had interesting pickup jobs while I was living in Amsterdam. So, I came back. And during college I had found a job at something called a keypunch operator. I don't know if you know what that is. Have you ever heard of that?

BPC: Explain it to me.

DF: In 1890, the Census was tabulated by a system that was created by Herman Hollerith. He worked for the US Census Bureau and I believe he started a company that ultimately became IBM. The tabulating system used a card that was a little bit bigger than the modern one, and it had 80 columns and 12 places to put holes. What happened is on a typewriter you would type and it would punch those holes, and then there were devices that would be able to read those. When I started as a key punch operator, it was the era when everyone was starting to computerize. It was the advent of the IBM mainframe computer's penetration into large businesses like insurance companies and banks. There were service bureaus – in fact, IBM's company was called a service bureau – that would hire essentially secretarial types. Really anybody, because the ethic and gender diversity was across the board, but it was people that knew how to type on these machines, and they got a premium. This was like the perfect part-time job. Furthermore, they were open 24/7. What that meant for me as a college student was that I could go in in the middle of the night. I would take the train down from the Bronx and do my thing and sort of contribute to putting myself through school. When I came back from Europe, I knew I didn't want to do

that anymore. I'd had a friend who had gotten a job as a trainee as a programmer, which we now call coding. They've changed the terminology. We can go into why I think we've done that over the years, but I wanted to get that kind of a job, so I ended up applying for a job. It was a tiny little one-inch ad in the New York Times when the New York Times had paper ads. And it said, "Programmer trainee," and it gave a phone number. And it turned out it was a direct phone number to American Express human resources. I was called in for an interview. I passed the interview, but you also had to take a test. And I passed the test, so I was hired as a trainee. They were interested in anybody who had a college degree. They were so desperate for people to learn how to do this. The manager at that time was a little bit on the crazy side, the professional crazy side, and I'll say what that means in a minute. He wanted to hire people that were not math majors but people that had a liberal arts background. That's totally changed in the modern world. Right now, you need a degree in computer science, or information systems, and you need all kinds of skills.

BPC: Right. But at the time you were what they were looking for because you majored in history.

DF: Yes, my major was in history and that was my skill. The fact that I was this keypunch operator was totally unrelated. So, I was trained for six weeks and then became a programmer at American Express. The thing that made this person crazy, and I don't mean that in any... he was out there in many ways. But he was committed to a technique that really became the standard technique, and it was called structured programming. It's basically the way things are done today, with major, major changes, variations, and viewpoints, but the idea was to make sure that the programming was a little more organized. That's the only way I can describe it simply. But because of that word structure, it kind of made it sound like it limited creativity. I can remember when I was interested in changing jobs, going to an interview at a bank or an insurance company, and they would look at me almost disparagingly when they saw that I worked at American Express and say, "Oh yeah, they make you use that 'structured programming,'" which, of course, became the standard. So, this guy was sort of crazy enough to know what the standard was going to become. And I loved working in this major corporation. I'm a 60s type, or at least I was. When I got my interview, I went and cut my hair. It wasn't very long, but I cut it. When the manager, the crazy manager, wanted to hire me, he called me and said I want to hire you, but – remember I had just gotten a haircut – you have to cut your hair. [Laughter]. So, I went into this kind of opposite of counterculture and found that I really enjoyed it. I really got an appreciation for banking and the banking system. But the main thing, being kind of a computer nerd at that time, was that they had tons and tons and tons of money, so all the latest equipment and toys came to the banks first, banks and insurance companies.

BPC: What were those like back then? I mean, a computer basically took up an entire room back then, right?

DF: So, the model was a mainframe computer that did what's called batch-oriented programming. This is when I came. It was changing from something that was even a little bit more low level. It was not a room but a floor. I was in a department that could actually go into the computer room. You would go into the computer room and you would step up about a foot because all the cables were underneath. In fact, that's the way it's done now at Pace. All the labs are up at about 6 inches, but you almost don't notice it when you walk in. And there was no connection from your desk to the computers at that time. So, you would write your programming code on sheets that had formatted lines and columns. You would write it in a programming language, and then you would give it to the keypunch department. We described

earlier that there were people that keypunched. What I didn't say is the kind of work that I was doing back then was taking bank records, insurance company records, major corporation records that were all manual and giving them to these service bureaus that put them on punch cards so they could load them up into their computers on computer tape or disk. And that technology evolved a little bit later. Now, as a programmer in 1970, you would write up the code as neatly as you could, you would get it back as cards, you would go into a room that was about the size of a bedroom that had machines that could read those punch cards, and they would read in the punch cards. It would analyze your computer code, and if there were any errors, you would get a printout. You could see the errors and then you'd have to fix the punch cards. So, the process was quite complicated. Furthermore, one could save what you had coded on a system – and again this was all done using keypunch cards and commands –and all of that, none of which is connected to the desktop. Let's jump to Pace and then I'll go back to that. When I came to Pace in 1977, we had a very, very similar system. I was in Westchester County. We had a mainframe that was not IBM in New York City, and we had one of these machines that read punch cards into the computer that was in New York City. So, the students would have to punch their own cards. They would go to the “keypunch room,” which I’ll describe in a minute, and there was somebody there that would take the cards, read them in to be processed by the computer in New York City that generated a printout.

BPC: That kind of sounds like a fax machine sort of process, right?

DF: In a sense, yeah.

BPC: At least in terms of feeding it and getting a printout receipt.

DF: Yeah. It would read it electronically, except that because they were these punch cards, it could read an encoded form, whereas fax is really just an image.

DF: So, this would be the encoded form. It would be read into this computer. It was a computer. It was a UNIVAC. You probably don't remember that name, but it was a computer on the New York campus. A couple of things about the Pace environment then: both administrative and academic computing were all using the same computer, so there was sort of a competition, and, naturally, University computing got priority, although some of us felt that it shouldn't. It was many years later that all of that separated; not that many years later but like five years later the equipment changed and we started getting our own equipment in Westchester. The other interesting thing is that there is a building in Westchester called Wilcox Hall. Wilcox Hall now has a multipurpose room, which is where all the computers are in the lab. If you went all the way downstairs in that building to the basement level, at that time there was the Registrar on one side and the Bursar on the other side with these tables in the middle. I think it was also the cafeteria, but I don't remember. And at the front of the room was this machine that read the cards into the UNIVAC in New York City, so it was also the computer lab. You had the Registrar, the Bursar, and the computer lab all occupying the same space.

BPC: Was this a single room or the entire floor?

DF: A single floor, the basement of Wilcox Hall. Now, the same basement has the Communications Department, which has all of their communications equipment. They have a very elaborate set of labs for creating videos. They have some people in their department that create world class videos. There's a student travel course that allows them to travel the world doing documentaries. So, they've got all of

this equipment for both teaching and production on that same floor, only now it's in a series of rooms. Back then it was just sort of all open. This is before the library moved. So, after being at American Express for three years, the next job that I had didn't really work out. I was there for a year and didn't like it. I got hired by a bank called Chemical Bank, which you may not have heard of, but they got acquired or merged with a bank called Manufacturers Hanover Trust. They got acquired by Chase, who got acquired by JP Morgan. So, now we have JP Morgan Chase. So, I was there before all of that. But the advantage again is that, as a bank, they had all the money, and one of the first things they did was put terminals on the desktop. In my office in this major American corporation, top technology, there were six desks in individual cubicles; and the two desks in the back had computer terminals. They called them dumb terminals. There were no PCs. A dumb terminal is a tech word. The dumb terminal has no intelligence other than being able to communicate with the central computer. The central computers were becoming more sophisticated, and they had software that would allow you to edit your program. You could type in the program, no more keypunch cards. You could type it in, have it validated. You could run it. You could save and store it so you could work on it the next day. Everything kind of became automated through these centralized dumb terminals. This would have been back in 1977 or a little bit before.

BPC: Had you started or completed a master's program before you came to Pace?

DF: Yes. I knew that when I worked in industry, while I loved it, I really wanted to move back to some kind of a teaching or academic position. I didn't have a mainstream academic career like people who know that they want to teach or do research. For me, it kind of just happened. I made decisions as they came along, and I knew that teaching in a university would afford me a different kind of a lifestyle than working in the corporation, which isn't to say that I didn't enjoy working in the corporation. I would go in at 10, but most people would stay until 6, 7 or 8 o'clock. It had that kind of flexibility, working in the corporation, but I knew that I wanted to get a job in academia. So, the first thing I did was go off and get a master's degree in computer science. But to get a master's degree I really had to have a math major, or at least I felt that you did.

BPC: Did you have to take some prerequisites?

DF: I went back to Hunter College in the City of New York and took 30 credits of math, the equivalent of a major, and then I applied to NYU. I went to the Courant Institute, which is still there. It's a very famous mathematical school, and they had master's degrees. They had kind of zeroed in on the financial model of today for these large universities, which is a master's degree that doesn't require the same resources that a PhD would require. For a PhD, you have to have a faculty member mentoring students. Here you can have a class of 30, 40, 50, at the graduate level, and you could charge as much as you want. As you know, it's NYU; at the time it was much cheaper, but I went off and got a master's degree. And just as I was completing my master's degree in 1977, there was another little add in the New York Times for a teaching position in Westchester at Pace University

BPC: Were you aware of Pace at that time, and if you were, was it just the downtown campus?

DF: No, no. I lived in Manhattan for about 15 years when I got back from Europe in 1970. I don't think I was aware of it at that time. So, I went up for an interview. I rented a car. It was winter, because they were hiring for the spring, and it was snow covered – both the campus and the drive up. This is an absolutely idyllic, beautiful Westchester winter scene. I got very excited. I was interviewed by the Dean

of the Business School, Joe Pastore. He was Dean of the undergraduate Business School. I was hired by the Lubin School of Business, and it was only undergraduate. There was a graduate school, and it was called The Graduate School. A number of years later they were combined into the Lubin Schools of Business and then just the Lubin School, but I don't remember how many years later. In 1976, the Lubin School got a bachelor's degree in information systems and the Dyson College got a Bachelor of Science in computer science.

BPC: That was in Dyson?

DF: Yes, computer science was in Dyson. But there was no school of computer science.

BPC: That happened a few years later, in the 1980s?

DF: Yeah. And there were no computer scientists. The only computer scientists were in the Lubin School. There were three of us in my department. There was Marian Sackson, who's passed away. She was more information systems. There was Fran Gustavson, who passed away this year. And there was me. I was hired by them. I was in an office in Choate House that had the Finance Department, Management Department, and the IS department. There were six of us there, one from Management, two from Finance and three from Information Systems. That's kind of where it all began. And then a few years later we did hire a computer scientist into Dyson College. At the time that we hired him, we developed the master's degree in computer science. It was really a collective group from both departments. This included Sue Merritt [founding Dean of the School of Computer Science and Information Systems].

BPC: Did those departments merge when the school was formed?

DF: The departments didn't merge. When the school was formed the Computer Science Department, which had been formed a few years earlier, was in the Dyson College, and the IS Department, which was in the Lubin School, were brought together. Now at the time, there were two departments. Well, there were really: IS Westchester; IS New York; CS Westchester; CS New York. A fifth department, Technology Systems, which began as Secretarial Science, became part of the school as well. For CS and IS, there was a Chair on both campuses. There were separate schedules, but there was a move to unify the curriculum over the years, so that in theory a student that took a course in Westchester could take the same course in New York. There was not a lot of cross-fertilization. If you wanted to have a meeting, you had to go to New York or you had to come to Westchester. So, that was a big part of the culture, if that's the right way to put it. There were we computer scientists and information systems people who designed a bachelor's degree... The degree in Lubin was called the Bachelor of Business Administration. The business school has concentrations: management, finance, Marketing, law, and accounting – you can't forget accounting – and information systems. As an undergraduate Lubin major, you would do all of your core courses – liberal arts, business – and then you would have a concentration. When we started the IS bachelor's degree in what was to become the Seidenberg School – the BSIS – that was separate but similar to the BBA in IS, we started a master's degree in computer science around the same time. There were three or four of us that put that together. This was incredibly successful because the world had kind of realized that if you know computing, you're going to get hired in a fun and lucrative profession.

BPC: By "successful" you mean it was a popular major with high enrollment from the very beginning?

DF: Yes, tremendous, which is part of the reason why the University invested in a school [Seidenberg School of CSIS].

BPC: Has it been like that continually or have there been fallow period?

DF: Absolutely not. A couple of major things changed. When the field was younger, you could say immature, but it was wide open. They would hire a history major to learn how to be a programmer.

BPC: So, it's kind of standardized over the years.

DF: Not only standardized, but its reputation changed to be closer to engineering in terms of a prospective student's perception of what it would be like to major and work in the field. My sense of it was that it became male dominated. From a very diverse population of students, it started to become more like engineering.

BPC: Were there a lot of like creative types, for lack of a better term, in the early days?

DF: I'm not sure I would say creative types, but just the collection of people that came in were in a way like me, people with a history major who wanted to get in to computing or people who were working in business or had a business major. I'm talking about the graduate program. The complexity of majors was much broader. That was one thing that happened, and the other is that it became a little more specialized. There was this perception that you were going to be programming all the time and that it was male dominated, so it started to lose interest. And this was a nationwide problem. I can remember going to open houses that were packed, and I can remember going to open houses in the last 10 to 15 years where three people showed up, which is amazing that it would be like that.

BPC: Is that for the graduate level?

DF: Undergraduate and graduate. For graduate, we had lines of people waiting around the block. But the industry started to change a little bit. There was a speech by Obama where he mentioned something about coding and programming for national competitiveness. The national associations associated with computer science and information systems started to realize that there was a problem. In addition to standardizing the curriculum, they started changing the way in which people viewed it. So, you no longer become a programmer; you become a coder, which, if you think about it, probably has more negative connotation, but they needed a new way of looking at it. And now there's a whole new generation of kids growing up who can program your VCR and you can't. So, there were people who started to change the way they thought about coding – this whole idea that coding is a necessary skill that should be taught in the schools. All of these things started to get a greater sense of awareness. And so things have changed. I understand that Seidenberg is one of the strongest schools in the University, financially. I don't think it's back to the way it was in the 80s and 90s, but we're solid and strong at this point. You reminded me of something else. I came to Pace when there was a Pleasantville campus, a White Plains undergraduate campus – I don't believe the Law School was there yet – a New York City campus and a Midtown Center. There may have been a few others. We had a Hudson Valley office building at one point in Dutchess County.

BPC: I did want to ask about that. What was the feel of the campus? Wasn't there an equestrian program?

DF: Yes, absolutely. There was an equestrian program. That's where I learned to ride horses and play polo.

BPC: After coming to Pace?

DF: After coming to Pace. We had an equestrian program, and as a faculty member you could take free lessons. My spouse at the time had been an equestrian, and I thought I wanted to learn how to ride horses. So, I got very involved with the equestrian program. They brought in somebody to teach polo, and I learned how to play polo. For 10 or 15 years I was a polo player, not professional, not very good.

BPC: Polo on horseback?

DF: Horse polo. There are two kinds of polo. There's arena polo, which is played in half a football field, maybe a little less. There are different dimensions. I forget what they are. That's an intercollegiate sport. We never had an intercollegiate team, but it's a winter college sport. Places like Yale, Cornell, University of Virginia, Skidmore, they all have polo teams all over the country. I went a couple of years ago to the National Championships at the University of Connecticut. So, I used to play arena polo, which has three players on each side, and the ball never leaves the arena. It's a little bit more exciting on one level, and you're always in position to get a ball, because if somebody hits it hard, it bounces off wall and then it's sort of always back in play. The other game, the one that most people know about is called grass polo, and I played that a little bit, but you really need to own your horses if you want to play outdoors and even indoors. I've never personally owned horses. I've always used horses that belong to the polo club. Plus, I live in a community that has more than 150 miles of trails, in Westchester County, and I got involved with a barn here, and I used to go riding twice a week, and we have all these fields and all these jumps. You would think you were in England.

BPC: So, was the polo club at Pace or you just learned to ride there?

DF: No, no. I just learned to ride at Pace. For one semester they had a polo program, but my understanding is the University wasn't interested in that because of liability issues, which makes sense.

BPC: What else do you remember about the campus in those days?

DF: There is now an Environmental Center, but we used to call it the Farm, and we had all these animals there, and there was some gardening. The campus didn't have as many buildings. The dorms that are there now were not there then. We had North Hall and the two dorms that are near Entrance Three. You could drive everywhere, and it had much more of a rural feel. Where the Environmental Center was there was a very old farmhouse and not so much paddocks but fenced in areas for the animals. It was very viable because they would have school visits every day, from the elementary schools in the area. But talk about quote-unquote the old days, but I think the campus still keeps its Westchester rural character. The thing that has changed, for me, is there was a sense that things were smaller and people knew each other a little bit more. For example, when I started, the Business School, computing, and the Dyson College – hopefully I have this right – were all at Choate House. But as we started to expand, and they built the Goldstein Academic Center, we [computing] and the Lubin School moved there. So, now you have on one side of campus the Business School and the computing school; on another side of campus you have the Dyson College, and in another building yet you have nursing, which wasn't yet the College of Health Professions. And in a very small building near where Goldstein is now you had the

School of Education. So all of a sudden you start separating the faculties and that sort of sense of community is interrupted, which goes to something else that I mentioned earlier. There was a dining room in Choate House, which is not there anymore. That was sort of a congregating place up until a few years ago, and many of the people that I know still today when they were at Pace they came from multiple disciplines. And we would all meet at the Choate house for lunch.

BPC: And Choate House is a big pink house, right? It's one of the jewels of the campus, isn't it?

DF: Yes. The story is: Ed [Edward J.] Mortola was basically a mergers and acquisitions kind of president. He saw a vision in Westchester. He got involved with the business community in Westchester. He was able to convince the Choate family and the Marks family to donate three estates in order to build the Pleasantville campus in 1963. The Choate family has roots in the Girl Scouts, and one of the vice presidents of the Girl Scouts used to own it [Choate House], and the word is – I don't know whether it's true or not – is that part of the bequest had to do with keeping it pink. [Editor's note: the sale agreement makes no mention of the requirement to keep the house pink.]

BPC: I've heard that too, yeah.

DF: Whether that's true or not, I like to think it is. My first office was in Choate House, but as we started to grow, we moved to Wilcox. Ultimately, we moved to the third floor of Goldstein.

BPC: You mentioned this in passing, but where was the library when you first came?

DF: The library was in Wilcox Hall.

BPC: Because the current library building opened in 1983, I think.

DF: I don't know the date, but yes. And that was a major change. In fact, I had a conversation with one of the librarians at the time, and just because of its accessibility, usage went up dramatically. Like, 50% or more people were hanging out at the library.

BPC: Was it kind of cramped in Wilcox?

DF: Yes, it was cramped in Wilcox, naturally. I don't really remember it that much. I do remember that they had more than one floor, and they had – I don't know if you know what a dumbwaiter is?

BPC: Oh, yeah.

DF: So, there was a dumbwaiter to move books between the floors.

BPC: We still have one in the New York City library. It's in the staff area in the back, but yeah. That's how get things from the first to the second floor.

DF: So, that was a big change. The big changes for me before the current revamping were the building of the Campus Center, the Goldstein Building, the library, and the Fitness Center. These things kind of come in waves at universities, and there was a time when universities felt that in order to be modern, they needed a new fitness center. We needed a library, any way you looked at it, but they built the gym.

BPC: The fitness center is supposedly very nice up there. Isn't there an Olympic sized pool?

DF: Oh, no. It's beautiful. That was a great addition. But Wilcox, in addition to the registrar, bursar and computing, also had the library and the gym. So, it was actually a rather multipurpose building.

BPC: You were there for the Briarcliff acquisition, too, right?

DF: I came right at the same time as Briarcliff. It was in 1977. I came in January, and I think they acquired it either 1976 or 1977, but it didn't have an initial impact for a couple of reasons. One was they only took one faculty member. All the other faculty members that were working at Briarcliff were, I guess, let go. At least they didn't have a job [at Pace]. One of the Briarcliff campus claims of fame is that Richard Nixon's daughters went there. It was considered a "finishing school."

BPC: And this campus was just a couple of miles away, right?

DF: Yeah. What happened was once we bought it, the Briarcliff community, which is a relatively wealthy Westchester community, didn't want the traffic. And they prevented the University from using it other than for events and dorms, no classes. So, it never became a viable campus. It was viable in many respects, but it could not have its full utilization. It was used for dormitories. It had nice outdoor sports fields. It had two very nice classroom buildings, but we ended up leasing one of them to IBM for many years, and they used it as one of their broadcast studios for their internal broadcast network. They would broadcast classes, meetings. Like we have our Zoom from home, they would hold meetings or seminars or workshops, and they would be in this classroom, and they could bring in other classrooms from around their IBM network. In fact, I have a video somewhere, because faculty members were able to teach classes on the IBM network to IBM on a consulting basis. I never did that, but I did take a one day class on how to do that, and they videotaped me. That was kind of fun. So, then IBM left, and there was really nothing. Enrollment started to shift more downward, and they were looking at it more as a liability or as a potential real estate asset. And of course, they were going to be expanding the campus here in Pleasantville to have the dormitory space that Pace had used in Briarcliff. When all of this comes together, you have the ability to raise some money and centralize the campus. For me, Briarcliff never really worked because they were putting freshmen on the Briarcliff campus, and the freshmen had to bus to the Pleasantville campus. The bus service apparently was really very good, so it wasn't like it was a problem.

BPC: Was it a Pace operated shuttle?

DF: Oh, yeah, and it ran often enough. I never heard complaints about it from students or anybody. It's just that if you were at the library, you couldn't just walk back to the dorm; you'd have to take the bus back. Or if you're in your dorm and there's an event going on, you'd have to get up early and get going.

BPC: So, we're all freshmen who dormed on that campus?

DF: I believe so, yes. For a time, freshmen were there and I believe sophomores, and then as they became upperclassmen, they were allowed to move to the Pleasantville campus. I always thought it should be the other way around because you really want to draw people in.

BPC: And that [Briarcliff campus] was sold off in the last ten years or so to finance the current master plan?

DF: That was in the last couple years. That was very recent. It was part of financing the campus plan, which hopefully will be successful in terms of enrollment and attracting students, but I think they did a

terrific job. The buildings are great; the dorms are great. It brought it into the modern age. It changed from its rural look and feel to a more not so much suburban but modern campus. One of my kids went to Hamilton College, which is in the middle of nowhere, and you go on campus and you have these buildings that go back to the 1800s, but you also have these very beautiful modern spaces. Personally, I think they did a good job. I was pleased that they were going to do that.

BPC: Do you have any stories about [Edward J.] Mortola [president of Pace University from 1960 to 1984] or any other administrator?

DF: Well, Mortola was the President, and he ran it like a benevolent dictator. Maybe dictator is too strong [of a word].

BPC: He was well-liked, wasn't he?

DF: He was very well-liked, and he made really good decisions for Pace at the time. There was a second in command, a Vice President named Jack Schiff. The two of them together ran the New York and Westchester operations, which included the College of White Plains and Pleasantville, and I think he was part of the Briarcliff acquisition as well. He [Mortola] would come to all the faculty council meetings in the early days. As I say, he was very well-liked. He was very accessible. In the early days, we would have these great campus-wide receptions with lots of food. Alcohol was served at them. Now occasionally they'll serve wine, but this was kind of a full reception. There is something called Founders Day, and if I remember correctly, there was always a multi-campus Founders Day reception that was always incredibly well-appointed, but that stopped many years ago, and the University started becoming a little bit more concerned about alcohol consumption and doing it the right way. And during difficult financial times, you could argue about whether you should be spending money on receptions. So, that changed. But I've been here for six Presidents: Mortola, Sharwell, Ewers, Caputo, Friedman and now Krislov. I've been here for quite the arc of leadership at Pace.

BPC: I think there were only two Presidents before Mortola.

DF: Yes, the Pace brothers. [Editor's note: Pace was founded in 1906 by Homer and Charles Pace. Homer was President from 1906 to 1942. His son, Robert Pace, was president from 1942 to 1960.]

BPC: You mentioned something about living room performances.

DF: In the old days, we used to have lunch at the Choate House, and it was very interdisciplinary then. We had historians there, finance people and computing people and English and nursing, and everybody kind of got to know each other. There was a living room in Choate House.

BPC: Had the family feel from the Choates been preserved to some extent?

DF: No, I don't think so.

BPC: It wasn't like original furniture in there or anything like that?

DF: Oh, well, if the question is from a decoration point of view, the answer is yes. There was a piano. There were couches and chairs, and it was right off the entranceway. When you came into the Choate House, if you went straight, you'd be in office of the President and Provost, although there wasn't a Provost way back when. If you went to the right, you'd go to the faculty office area of Choate House and to the left was a living room, which is basically a faculty lounge similar to the one in New York. So, what

happened is that one of the faculty members organized a night where people would come and they would perform, faculty members.

BPC: Like, music or stand-up or a variety of things?

DF: It wasn't stand-up. It was music or a reading or poetry, and it was very lovely. And it was at night on this beautiful campus.

BPC: Was it advertised? And could students come or was it limited to faculty?

DF: I think it was strictly faculty. I'm not even sure if staff were invited. I just don't remember. There was a professor, John Norman, a historian, and he could speak eloquently about anything, so he would be kind of the MC, as it were. But he would come and if someone was doing a song or whatever, he would give the background and a whole introduction, so that was really kind of lovely. There was a point where I thought I might try to do something like that again, but those things changed a little bit because as the campus grew up, now you had more buildings and more places, and people didn't know each other as much. There wasn't as much opportunity to do that. It became a little bit more distributed, which was kind of a disappointment. We suffer at Pace, in Pleasantville in particular, from the fact that we are these separate schools, each of which have separate departments, and so we lose a certain kind of community amongst faculty that existed previously.

BPC: So, each department is in a separate building at this point [in Pleasantville]?

DF: Yeah, each school, and when you have an open house – this is a pet peeve of mine – you have a student coming in thinking they want to be an accountant because their parents said, “This is Pace. You should be an accountant.” There's no real opportunity for them to explore, at an open house, any of the other disciplines because they sign up and go to a room where all the business department presentations are given. So, it's very hard to give opportunity and choice, like an activities fair where all the clubs have their tables. You don't really get that during the open house season. They used to have a “choose your major” kind of thing for sophomores, and that was a day where all the different schools and departments in Westchester would have a table in this big room, as well as some of the activities and so on. In growing up [as a campus], we've lost a little bit of that sense of community.

BPC: Do you want to talk about your evolution as an academic? You said you did your PhD in the early 2000s after you'd been at Pace for a while, and then you did a master's. Was it in environmental studies?

DF: Yeah, I can say a little bit about that. I had a degree in history, but it was clear that I needed a master's degree if I wanted to teach, and when I got hired you didn't need a PhD, which changed shortly thereafter. And I got tenure. So, I was able to get tenure without a PhD. Getting tenure wasn't contingent on having a PhD. I was probably one of the last people to get tenure without a PhD. Afterward, we would hire people with a master's degree, but they would have to get a PhD to get tenure. That meant it gave them the requisite three to five years before the tenure process [started]. Now, you may be getting ready to defend your PhD when you're hired, but you have to have it by time you start [teaching at Pace]. But there was definitely a class system at Pace, and the class system was people with PhDs and people without PhDs. And, not in any real sense, but without one you were kind of a second-class citizen. If you didn't have a PhD, your title – not your official title – was “professor.” By

the way, “professor” at European universities and at most university is the highest rank, so I'm not referring to it in this sense.

BPC: You're talking about full versus associate professor and so forth.

DF: Yeah, yeah. All universities use this. You start as an assistant professor. When you get tenure, you become an associate professor. There are exceptions. When you are prominent in your field, as it were, you can apply for full professor. It's heavily weighted toward research. At Pace today, you need to demonstrate a strong research potential to get hired, strong research accomplishment to get tenure, and then maintain that to become a full professor.

BPC: Is that a cultural change? Was there more emphasis on teaching in the early days?

DF: In the early days, there was always an emphasis on the three [scholarship, research, teaching]. But if you were a good teacher and you were minimally active professionally... Research means either bringing in grants or publishing in peer reviewed journals. But you can be minimally active by being on a panel at a national conference or having a paper presentation at a national conference, which is a much lower bar than a journal article. Back then, having a moderate amount of activity, being a good teacher and doing some service was sufficient to get tenure. This is totally different today. When I got tenure, those were the rules; you didn't even need a PhD. But what I was mentioning is that there were these two classes of citizens, which didn't change anything in terms of... actually, it did. It affected your salary because if you didn't have a PhD, you couldn't get promoted to associate professor. You could [at one time], but that stopped early on, and salary increments were not based on merit. They were based on rank. So, you got more of a percentage [salary increase] as a full professor than you did as an associate than you did as an assistant. Without a PhD, I wasn't going to get promoted. Also, without pursuing a PhD, I wasn't going to get hired, and that's what I did early on. I was in a PhD program at NYU, but that just sort of lingered and lingered. I switched to another university, Brooklyn Polytech, which is now part of NYU. There's a whole story behind that. Ultimately, I ended up back at NYU and completed a degree in educational technology, so my 3 degrees are all from NYU. Once I completed the degree, I could get promoted to full professor, and that happened quickly, because I had been there and I was more than moderately active, although probably not as active as you need to be today, even to be hired. Today, really, there is a very high standard, which I think is great. We have hired some very strong candidates. But I wanted to mention about “second class citizens.” When you got a memo with a CC list, it would be “Dr. so and so” if you had a PhD and “professor so and so” if you did not. And while that totally made sense because you can't say “doctor” if the person doesn't have a PhD, it kind of pointed out who did and who didn't. And to this day, it kind of made me uncomfortable. It was so obvious [what they were doing], that it was kind of weird. To this day, I feel like I have to stay with my roots, so I don't sign my messages “Dr. Farkas” or PhD or anything like that. So, that was that. There was something else you'd mentioned.

BPC: Did you want to talk about your master's degree and what you're up to currently: research interests or how your teaching has broadened?

DF: So, the campus over the years has tried to brand itself. I would argue that it's been unsuccessful. Pace branding had always been and successfully been: the place to go for accounting. And then that changed. I'm not sure of all the reasons, but that changed. We were one of two business schools where the final exam/capstone was the CPA exam. Now, they weren't sitting for the CPA, but when students

went to take their final exam in accounting, they took the exam that was just taken by all the CPA's around the nation. We were really at the center of that. An anecdote about that is that they needed somebody in Pleasantville to pick up the CPA exam at the AICPA, which is their national organization. I volunteered because I knew people in accounting, and I drove down to Manhattan. I double parked on a street where today you'd be towed in three seconds, picked up the exam, got stuck in traffic on the way back to Pleasantville and arrived around 15 minutes after the exam was supposed to start. I can remember going into Wilcox gym with literally 150 students ready to take their final exam. So, Pace over the years as things changed, has tried to brand the campuses differently. So, Pace Pleasantville for the longest time in branding was the environmental campus, the outdoors campus, which makes sense. Now, they're changing it to biotechnology and engineering. But at the time that it was the environmental science campus, I was a little bit interested, and the Dean certainly was interested because she wanted to have you know foot in the door to see what was going on. And so I got very involved in environmental issues in the county. When I got involved, Pace had started something called the Environmental Consortium of Colleges and Universities, which university presidents had to sign on to, but it was free to join. We had about 60 plus colleges and universities in the Hudson Valley as members. If you go to the website, you'll see which ones. I got involved, and then I got on the board, and more and more I was getting involved in environmental things. I got involved with the biology department because I had a colleague there with whom I researched and published. My involvement had more to do with something called geographic information systems, which was one of these subjects like computing that caught my fancy and I got very interested in it. And I ended up teaching a class in GIS in the environmental science program. In biology, we had master's students doing research on animals on campus using photo tracking cameras. And I would be on these committees of these students, because they were mapping their results. They were also doing statistical analysis of their results, but always with some kind of a map. Choosing where to place cameras is basically a mapping problem. How do you randomize locations? Most recently I was on the committee for a thesis that was looking at landfill areas in Jamaica Bay over time, so there's all kinds of things that relate to location, and that's something that I was very interested in. But the other thing that was going on at the same time is while I would go to these meetings, these were all people that had backgrounds in environmental science, many of them on the technical side. For instance, what do you do with wastewater? What do you do with landfill? You know, the more technical side of climate change. These are people that work with New York City Water. So, I decided that these people really know what they're talking about, and I want to know what they're talking about. It kind of augmented my interest in geographic information systems. I decided to get a master's in environmental science and policy, and the easiest place to do that was at Johns Hopkins.

BPC: Did Pace not have a program at that time or did they not have courses that appeal to you?

DF: I decided I wanted to go to someplace other than Pace. They did have a master's program. It was a little bit more research oriented than I was interested in.

BPC: Was John Hopkins online or low residence?

DF: Johns Hopkins had a blended program. They had a very good model. I had to take two courses in residence. I was going to take more, but I went down and stayed in a hotel for a few weeks to take those courses, and it was an incredibly positive experience.

BPC: Did you fit it in over a sabbatical or during summers?

DF: No, since it was part time. I started 2001, finished in 2004. In order to get into that program, I had to take math and chemistry. I already had math from 30 years before at Hunter, which they accepted, but I had to take chemistry. Shout out to David Rahni, and Ellen Wieser, who passed away recently. These are terrific chemistry professors, and the year that I took chemistry before going into the environmental science program was a killer. I was doing it while I was working, and taking chemistry for the first time is killer, but I have to say it was worth it. The professors here are really terrific. So, I completed that degree and it kind of augmented my GIS to a certain extent. Remember, GIS is computing, which I'm still very much involved with. I just had a journal article published on sustainability and GIS with Namchul Shin, who is Chair of the IS department in New York. We are looking at the gig economy: Uber, Airbnb. If you think about it, their underlying platforms are very IS; one significant component being mapping or GIS. If you go online to Airbnb, what you see is a map, and behind that map is a database that has information about the site and so on. Following through on this research, I found a book on the gig economy. If you think about Airbnb, you pay Airbnb, and they pay the provider of the rooms. Or you pay the Uber platform, and the drive is there. But that's not a true peer-to-peer payment. In other words, you're not finding someone with a room and giving them some cash.

BPC: There's a middle person.

DF: It turns out there is a way to eliminate the middle person, and that is using the blockchain. When I say eliminating, I don't really mean eliminating, because those platforms provide a lot of things. So, there was a chapter in this book on the gig economy that had to do with peer-to-peer payments, and they mentioned this thing called the blockchain, and my first reaction was: I don't have a clue what they're talking about. What is this all about? I just kept reading and learning more about it, then I started investing because the only way to learn about something is to do it. And I've been very much involved with it over the last few years, and just recently I submitted a journal article related to user perception of risk when using cryptocurrency. That's kind of where I am right now, very invested in GIS and blockchain. In fact, the marriage of the two is that we did a national survey of risk perception in using cryptocurrency, but we asked about the location, gender, education level of all of the participants, and that raised interesting GIS questions. I haven't done anything with it yet, but when I have some time, I might do that.

BPC: Did you want to talk about Unix or anything else?

DF: I did want to mention that Pace University is one of the foremost in online education, and that all started at Seidenberg in something that was initially called the Pace Computing Learning Center. I got involved with it. It was one of these passions, like blockchain and GIS. In the early days, I was very interested in operating systems. Operating systems is a subject in computer science, and I started teaching seminars around the country, many of them for IBM because IBM was starting to move in this direction. Coming out of the Learning Center was the development of online education and an interest in it at the University. The University got a huge grant from the Verizon Foundation to develop online courses. They called them Thinkfinity Grants. I was involved in a number of them.

BPC: When was this?

DF: Early 2000s. I got three or four Thinkfinity Grants that related to a variety of things. One of them was teaching GIS to faculty members. Coming out of this was the development of online courses, and that process continues in a much more formal way today. So, the story of Unix is that Bell Labs had an

internal operating system that they used called Unix. They weren't allowed to sell it, because in that time period around 1980 they had a telecommunications monopoly, and they were not allowed to be in any business other than telecommunications. With the breakup of the Bell system, they could branch out and start selling computer hardware, which they started to do. At that time, IBM decided to do some communications, as it were. Neither succeeded in the way they wanted to succeed. Coming out of this Unix environment was an open-source operating system called Linux, and it was Linux that kind of took off. Because of this interest, I wrote a book about Unix in 1981. I became very involved with IBM teaching Unix around the country. This was all under the auspices of the Computer Learning Center. It was all sort of through the University. We had a program with IBM. That program evolved, and we made these Unix workshops, eight-week classes. When IBM kind of partially collapsed in the 80s, many of the students who were IBM employees came to these Unix classes to retrain. That was another area that I was interested in. To summarize, I started off in computing in general but then got interested in certain specific areas which include Unix, the environment, GIS and then blockchain. We'll have to see what comes next. Who knows?

BPC: That's great. We covered a lot today. I think we covered pretty much everything.

DF: The only thing is the difference between CS and IS. My definition is that IS is applied computing to a certain extent and CS is a little bit more theoretical and programming. As a practical matter, CS people develop the applications that are used by IS people. Whereas if you study IS, you learn how to build database applications, like for a bank. So, the actual platform is developed by computer scientists, but the application comes from information systems people. So, information systems people work with organizations of a little bit higher level, and I used to say that it's harder to be an information systems person because you have to make decisions that are not quite as discreet as a computer science person. So do you buy this set of equipment for \$10 million or this one? Well, putting \$10 million on the line is a very difficult decision; whereas in developing software, you have teams of people that are going down lots of different paths, but coming to a consensus is a little bit different than the decisions that people in IS make. I may be a bit biased, but I come from both worlds. I have a degree in both CS and IS. But I think one of the problems we've had in IS is that in high schools people only hear CS, so when they come to Pace to get a major, they don't know what IS is. And it's very hard for us to convince parents, guidance counselors and teachers that, in fact, there are so many ways to work with computing that it's not just computer science. If you want to be an app developer or you want to get into mobile technology, many of these are IS oriented fields, which you might not know based on what you have been told in high school or by peers. So, it's a liability.

BPC: That was great. We really got a lot. Thanks.